

## 1104.0 - CURF Microdata News, Sep 2007

Previous ISSUE Released at 11:30 AM (CANBERRA TIME) 27/09/2007

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### Features



#### New CURF release

Whilst no further CURF releases are expected in 2007, one important new CURF release is anticipated in the first quarter of 2008. As always, the advertised release date is indicative only and may change. Stay up to date with CURF releases by visiting our [List of Expected CURFs](#) web page or by subscribing to Email Alerts for CURFs through the free [ABS Email Notification Service](#).

#### Adult Literacy and Lifeskills (2006) Basic and Expanded CURF - Indicative release date January 2008

The Adult Literacy and Lifeskills (2006) survey was conducted for the first time in the second half of 2006.

The Basic and Expanded CURFs for this survey contain data items on the following topics: literacy skills; general information; linguistic information; parental information; labour force activities; literacy and numeracy practices; participation in education and training; social capital and well being; information and communications technology; and, household composition and income.

Users are able to tabulate, manipulate and analyse data to their individual specifications. Steps to confidentialise the dataset are taken to ensure integrity of data, optimise its content and maintain confidentiality of respondents. This includes removing any information that might uniquely identify an individual, reducing the level of detail for some items and collapsing some categories.



### **On-line CURF applications?**

ABS is currently looking at ways to streamline the CURF application process and is considering the development of on-line forms. These would replace the current paper forms used to apply for access to CURFs. We are also examining ways to help CURF Contact Officers manage access to CURFs in their organisation through development of a system that would enable Contact Officers to manage existing registered CURF users, new CURF registrations and renewals from their desktop.

If there is something you would like to see included in this system email your ideas through to [microdata.access@abs.gov.au](mailto:microdata.access@abs.gov.au)

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### **Testing, testing, testing - do you use CURF test files?**

The ABS are considering new ways of structuring CURF test files to help users obtain more accurate outcomes from their testing.

CURF test files are downloadable files that broadly reflect the same structure as particular CURFs. However, the data in each test file is synthetic and has been randomly generated.

The main use for downloaded test files is that they can be used to develop code to run against the actual CURF on RADL. RADL programs can be run locally against downloaded test files to check for syntax errors prior to submitting the job through the RADL.

CURF test files are currently available for all Basic and Expanded CURFs on RADL. Find them on the CURF Documentation pages within RADL.

MASS will provide users with an opportunity to provide comments and feedback on test files in the near future, with the interest in obtaining feedback on whether individual CURF users have ever heard of CURF test files and used them, and whether they met requirements.

If you have any comments or feedback from experiences regarding test files which you would like to provide to the ABS send an email to [microdata.access@abs.gov.au](mailto:microdata.access@abs.gov.au)

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### **ABS Email Notification Service - Now available for CURF Microdata**

As of early September, you can receive email alerts about new CURF releases. You can sign up to receive Notifications for new releases of individual CURFs or you can sign up for the lot - including Alerts for CURFs not previously released.

To subscribe to this free service visit the ABS home page and click on '[Email Notification Service](#)' in the middle of the page.

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## Updating RADL historical CURFs

The ABS has been working toward standardising CURF documentation on CD-ROMs and on the RADL. CURF documentation will now include test files for Stata which will enable CURF users to develop code prior to submitting jobs in the RADL. The RADL CURF Documentation will also be changed so that it is viewed as a standard page layout. This means that no matter which CURF documentation page you visit, each will look the same as the next with information relevant to a specific CURF.

Additionally, CURF names will be standardised on the ABS website and in the RADL to make locating CURF information easier and faster.

We expect to finish this work over the next 6 months.

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## MASS Media



### Re-release of Step by Step Guide - Text Amendments

On 15 August 2007, Version 2 of the Managing ABS CURFs - Step by Step Guide was released.

The new version updates the section for Consultants to reflect a newly simplified application process (only the CON1 form is now required). The Glossary section of the Guide has also been restructured to make it easier to use.

It is recommended that the new version be downloaded to replace any copies of Version 1 that your organisation may have.

Download a copy, from the ABS website, of the latest version of the Managing ABS Confidentialised Unit Record Files (CURFs): A Step by Step Guide, 2007 (cat. no. 1406.0.55.004).

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## MASS Culture



### Using CURFs in universities - What's allowable under the AVCC Agreement?

The ABS/AVCC CURF Agreement allows students and academics in participating universities to use CURFs to undertake research or for teaching purposes. This usage is not charged to the individual user but is paid by your university.

However, where students or academics in participating universities are undertaking projects as consultants to other organisations then access to the CURF will need to be purchased. In these circumstances it cannot be accessed free under the ABS/AVCC CURF Agreement. Specifically, where the use of the CURF is to support commercial or income generating projects, then the sponsoring organisation must purchase the CURFs. The consultant also needs to apply to use the CURF as a Consultant to that organisation. CURFs can be purchased by universities at the current ABS list price to be used to support commercial or income generating projects.

Visit the ABS/AVCC CURF Agreement web pages for more information.

Please contact [microdata.access@abs.gov.au](mailto:microdata.access@abs.gov.au) if you are unsure whether your proposed use of a CURF is

allowable under the ABS/AVCC Agreement.

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### **Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) data - Can I use it?**

Researchers in universities covered by the [ABS/AVCC CURF Agreement](#) can access data from the Luxembourg Income Study (LIS) free of charge. LIS is an international depository for anonymised household survey microdata provided by international agencies. Data from more than 30 countries is represented.

The range of household income data surveys represented in LIS includes ABS Income and Housing Costs microdata.

Microdata from all international collections included in LIS have been adjusted to provide income, demographic, labour market and expenditure information on three different levels: household, person and child. Almost all the microdata files in LIS cover multiple reference periods.

Access to LIS for researchers in AVCC universities is managed by LIS directly with researchers. All researchers will be required to sign Undertakings with LIS in order to access the data.

For more information please contact LIS via the link on the LIS web pages.

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### **CURFs with Special Conditions - How to apply**

Special conditions of use apply to some CURFs. This means that CURF users and your organisation's Responsible Officer need to "sign off" on these special conditions when applying for these CURFs.

This is an interim arrangement until new CURF Undertaking documents are prepared that will incorporate all special conditions into the one Undertaking.

To make this interim signing-off process a little easier, ABS has prepared a template that shows the special conditions of use for each of these CURFs and asks users and their CURF Responsible Officers to agree to the conditions by signing a short document. This document can be found by visiting the [Applying for CURF Microdata page](#). Once complete the document should be returned to ABS by mail, fax or email.

The CURFs with special conditions of use are:

- Australians' Employment and Unemployment Patterns (1994-97) Basic CURF
- Australians' Employment and Unemployment Patterns (1994-97) Expanded CURF
- Family Characteristics Survey (2003) Expanded CURF
- Income and Housing (2005-06) Expanded CURF
- Innovation in Australian Business (2003) Expanded CURF
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Survey (2004-05) Expanded CURF
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Social Survey (2002) Expanded CURF

For more information please contact [microdata.access@abs.gov.au](mailto:microdata.access@abs.gov.au)

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## **MASS Spectrum**



## Planned software upgrade in the RADL

Following the recent upgrade to SAS v9.0 in the Remote Access Data Laboratory (RADL), upgrades to both SPSS and Stata are being explored.

We expect that the next release of the RADL will include an upgrade to Stata v10 or SPSS v15. The next RADL release will be late in 2007.

Confirmation and a full list of the newly available features of the will be provided in a RADL Alert in the coming weeks. In the meantime, please contact us at [radl@abs.gov.au](mailto:radl@abs.gov.au) to enquire or provide feedback about RADL's software.

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## Using Weights in Modelling

Survey weights are most commonly used to produce estimates of aggregates, means, and quantiles for a population.

Whether you decide to use weights or not could have an effect on point estimates produced from the model, not only in terms of magnitude but possibly also in terms of sign and significance. Standard errors of these estimates will also differ in magnitude depending on whether weights are used. Use of survey weights in the model should lead to accurate point estimates. However, the standard errors of these estimates will not tend to be as accurate.

Visit the Frequently Asked Question - [Tips for using CURFs](#) for more detailed information on using survey weights with SAS, SPSS and Stata.

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# Australian Bureau of Statistics

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CURF Microdata News is a quarterly newsletter created by the Microdata Access Strategies Section at the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

CURF Microdata News is aimed at informing new and current Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF) Microdata users about issues and developments in the access to, and use of, CURF Microdata. The newsletter periodically covers topics such as available and forthcoming microdata releases, terms and conditions of access, responsible access to microdata and best practice tips, pricing, microdata research outputs, frequently asked questions, and information about applying for ABS CURF microdata.

Interested readers are also invited to visit the CURF Microdata pages on the ABS web site for relevant up-to-date information about each of these matters, as well as all application forms.

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